



ISSUE XII: FEBRUARY, 2020

Letter from the Editor:

Brothers and Sisters!

Restoring the right to vote to people in prison is not a reform, it is a call for systematic change. In 2019, we saw unprecedented progress in the conversation surrounding felony disenfranchisement. Over a dozen states introduced legislation towards ending felony disenfranchisement and in an effort to accomplish that goal, last year we published 11 issues of the monthly of the Right2Vote Report that were mailed to hundreds of incarcerated subscribers in 28 states across the country.

In 2020, we are partnering with IssueVoter, to cover not only state legislative progress, but to also cover relevant federal pieces of legislation that impact the rights of people in prison. These include bills like H.R. 196 Democracy Restoration Act, H.R.2348 Clean Slate Act and the H.R.3795 Second Look Act. Once passed these laws would directly impact our readers and we believe that people in prison have the right to be provided with up to date information about the discussions happening in our legislature around these issues. IssueVoter's mission is to give everyone an equal voice in our democracy by making civic engagement accessible, efficient, and impactful. Our goal is to bridge that gap of information in order to restore the rights of our brothers and sisters behind the wall to be informed in an effort, during this sensitive time in our nation's history, to restore their voting rights nationwide.

In this issue you will find information about the journey of a bill. You will also find the first set of federal pieces of legislation that we will be following, all of which are in the introduction stage of their journey, meaning they have a long way to go before becoming law.

Throughout each phase of a bill's journey I will be encouraging you to reach out to elected officials governing your district with your concerns and opinion as they relate to the pieces of legislation that this report covers or any other bills you are interested in following. I look forward to sharing more exciting news about collaborations that will continue to expand the magazine

Thank you for your passion and support!

In Solidarity,
Amani Sawari
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These are the NATIONAL DEMANDS of the men and women in federal, immigration and state prisons:

- 1.Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policies that recognize the humanity of imprisoned men and women.
- 2.An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.
- 3.Rescission of the Prison Litigation Reform Act, allowing imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.
- 4.Rescission of the Truth in Sentencing Act and the Sentencing Reform Act so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No human shall be sentenced to death by incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.
- 5.An immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing and parole denials of Black and brown humans. Black humans shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in Southern states.
- 6.An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting Black and Brown humans.
- 7.No denial of access to rehabilitation programs for imprisoned humans at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.
- 8.State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more rehabilitation services.
- 9.Reinstatement of Pell grant eligibility to prisoners in all US states and territories.
- 10.Recognition of voting rights for all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees and so-called "ex-felons." Their votes must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count!

RECENT STATE ACTION
INTRODUCED | VOTED | PASSED

- > The Good Time Campaign to Repeal Truth-in-Sentencing is petitioning for the Michigan Prisoner Rehabilitation Credit Act, collecting 350,000 signatures January - May 2020
- > New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signs Bills Restoring Voting Rights To More Than 80,000 People on probation and Parol.

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MOVEMENT MOVES

PEOPLE | POSITIONS | POWER

Bridging the Gap Between Civic Isolation and Engagement in Prison

by Amani Sawari February 11, 2020 | www.sawarimi.org

In 2019, we saw unprecedented progress in the conversation surrounding felony disenfranchisement. Last year, over a dozen states introduced legislation towards ending felony disenfranchisement:



eleven (CA, WA, CO, IA, MN, CT, NJ, TX, KY, TN, NM) of those states were fighting to restore the voting rights of people immediately upon their release from prison and seven (CO, NJ, HI, DC, CT, MA, NM) states aimed to end felony disenfranchisement

entirely by restoring voting rights to citizens during their incarceration, allowing them to vote while in prison. In many of these cases the bills and petitions have not made it past the finish line. In others, like Chicago, history was made where Cook County Jail has now become a permanent polling location, protecting the voting rights of pretrial detainees incarcerated there.

The journey that bills go to becoming laws is complex and seemingly never ending. In some states, like with Massachusetts' petition to restore prisoners voting rights, once the petition for new legislation is submitted to congress there is an additional process of being voted on in congress that would leave prisoners waiting for three opportunity to vote until 2023, at the soonest, to participate in a statewide election. For most states it would take at least two years for a bill to finish its journey and complete its rounds through the legislature before being implemented into law. This report's focus is on following new policies that impact our readers as they move through the legislative process. As a community we can hold legislators accountable in order to transform the conditions of prisons and the policies that impact the lives of people in prison.

We believe that civic engagement is a critical aspect of one's rehabilitation, practices like studying policy and voting in elections should be encouraged throughout ones prison sentence. In an effort to accomplish this, last year we published 11 monthly issues of the Right2Vote Report that were mailed to hundreds of incarce-

rated subscribers in 28 states across the country. Knowing that in some states it may take years to secure voting rights for impacted people, in the meantime it is our responsibility as a society to make sure that we can bridge that gap of communication between imprisoned people and their legislators. While many (aside from those in prison in Maine & Vermont) people in prison wait for their voting rights to be restored, prisoners can still engage in the electoral process and civics in a meaningful way including through studying policy, writing their legislator and communicating their concerns with others in their network. It's imperative that we critically think about how we've been blocked from participating in government in order to come up with creative ways to reinsert ourselves into the process. As imprisoned people born in the United States, we have to think about our natural role as citizens and the alternatives that exist within our position to influence policy and politicians on a local, state and federal level.

Immediate: Corresponding Directly with Legislators

An immediate way that people in prison can be civilly engaged is by corresponding directly with elected officials as their constituents. Legislators have the responsibility to address the needs of their constituents, including their imprisoned constituents. The problem is that most imprisoned people have no relationship with their legislator, simply because they have no consistent pathway of communication. There have been instances where representatives have visited prisons, but this is not a regular practice. Aside from that rare occasion there are no pathways by which people in prison can have their concerns addressed on a regularly consistent basis by people in office. To address this we are working to consolidate a list of elected officials based upon the locations of our subscribers that will be provided in the next issue in May. Please use this month to study the bills we have presented in this issue, next issue use the list provided to contact your legislator directly.

Short Term: Networking through Family to Influence Other Representatives

Knowing that most prisons are located in rural areas where convicted persons are not usually from, elected officials over these districts are often different from the officials in the districts where prisoners are from. For this reason while writing their legislator, prisoners should also encourage their outside networks of families and friends to speak about prison conditions to their elected officials, who would be more inclined to address those issues than politicians in rural areas where prisoners have little to no social capital. The more that elected officials hear about the unacceptable conditions of prison, the more responsive they will be to the policy changes needed in order to improve such conditions. By using immediate and short term methods in combination, people in prison can ensure that legislators from across the state are aware of their concerns.

Long Term: Demonstrating the Need For Prison Correspondence Staff in Every Legislator's Office

All legislators employed in any congressional body are assigned a group of staff people who work with different populations of the public on their behalf. There are even staff assigned to organize and respond to snail mail. Due to the fact that maintaining communications with constituents is a priority for elected officials, it is my intention that legislators who have prisons in their district establish prison Correspondence Staff teams to address the growing concerns coming from their incarcerated constituents. This way prisoners' concerns would be a primary focus for members of their staff team, increasing the likelihood of new legislation being introduced to address those concerns. The only way that we can accomplish this is by showing the need for such a position to be created, through people in prison sending more mail to their elected officials respond to bills that they care about. This would effectively bypass the corrupt grievance procedures that are perpetuated by the prison. It's essential that an outside regulatory body, like a legislative office, address prisoners concerns.

On a larger scale every single governing body with a jail, prison, detention facility or any other human warehouse in its governing district should have a department focused on addressing that population's concerns, or at least a prison correspondence staff person.

The current method of prison staff addressing their own violations is corrupt and ineffective. It's ridiculous to think that any person could properly address the abuses caused by their own staff. In addition to that it is unsustainable for us to continue to push this responsibility on family members of prisoners. Prison disability support departments are overwhelmed with meeting the basic needs of disabled and mentally prisoners, a population that is growing exponentially. In order to combat this, we must illustrate the need for change through the exhaustion of the pathways that exist currently exist so that new pathways will be created. That way we can expand the number of resources available and create new solutions to address long over-due problems to serve ourselves and the next generation of impacted people. —

THE JOURNEY OF A BILL

For those who aren't watching closely, the journey of a bill can be confusing, but while the process can be long it is not too hard to keep track of for those who are looking for updates and staying connected to their legislator. We use the term legislator to mean both members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. We use the term legislation to mean both bills (not yet passed) and laws (passed).

A bill may begin by being introduced in one of either side of congress, but a bill may be introduced and drafted in both sides of Congress at the same time.

Most bills naturally start off in the House of Representatives because there are many more members with a wider variety of ideas.

HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES
435 Members, 1 per District
All are elected every 2 years

Bill introduced in House



Bill referred to House committee(s) who may assign to subcommittee(s)



Assigned committees mark up (revise) the bill



Bill is read and debated in House, and amendments are added



House of Representatives votes on bill



If similar bills are passed in both chambers, a joint committee works together to solve the differences between the bills.



IssueVoter sends you an alert

ISSUEVOTER

By signing up for IssueVoter, you will receive an **alert** on bills related to issues you care about. You can send your opinion before Congress votes. Then, IssueVoter tracks how often your elected officials vote your way, creating a **personalized scorecard** and helping you be a more informed voter at election time.

IssueVoter adds your Rep's vote to your scorecard

Bill is sent to the President



Signed into law



Vetoed (Rejected)

SENATE

100 Senators, 2 per State
1/3 are elected every 6 years

Bill introduced in Senate



Bill referred to Senate committee(s) who may assign to subcommittee(s)



Assigned committees mark up (revise) the bill



Bill is read and debated in Senate, and amendments are added



Senate votes on bill



If there's no similar bill in the opposite chamber, the other chamber must hold a vote on the bill.

Community members, incarcerated, on parole, probation or otherwise impacted are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their legislators.

Legislators are responsible to support legislation that would address their constituents concerns or work with the impacted community members to create and advocate for new legislation that addresses their constituents' concerns.

IssueVoter is a phone/email alert service that can be found online at issuevoter.org/ and on social media @IssueVoter. Encourage your friends and family to use IssueVoter to follow the legislation that we are covering in the Right2Vote Report so that you all can discuss these bills and receive updates together.

ISSUEVOTER

IssueVoter is a nonpartisan organization with a mission to give everyone a voice in our democracy. IssueVoter is working with Right2Vote to highlight four pieces of outstanding legislation in Congress and we encourage you to send your opinion on any or all of these to your representative. Let them know which issues you care about and how you would like them to vote on these bills. Every constituent contact is counted by each representative's staff, no matter whether it is received by mail or phone. *Please make your voice heard!*

Should formerly incarcerated people be able to vote in federal elections?

Introduced → Passed House → Passed Senate → Resolving Differences → To President → Became Law

■ Democracy Restoration Act of 2019 (H.R. 196)

Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties

This bill addresses the voting rights of persons convicted of a criminal offense and the restoration of their voting rights. The bill declares that the right of a U.S. citizen to vote in any election for federal office shall not be denied or abridged because that individual has been convicted of a criminal offense unless, at the time of the election, such individual is serving a felony sentence. This bill would restore federal voting rights to people released from prison.

Sponsor: Rep. Jerrold Nadler (Democrat, New York, District 10)

“ Opponents say

"That's crooked politics... They know [the criminals are] going to vote Democrat," Trump said of McAuliffe and his political machine. "And that could be the swing. That's how disgusting and dishonest our political system is."

- President Donald Trump

“ Proponents say

"Once someone pays their debt to society, they're out there expected to pay taxes, they're expected to abide by the law, they're expected to support themselves and their families. I think that means they've got a right to vote."

- Sen. Elizabeth Warren (Democrat, Massachusetts)

Should certain criminal arrest records be sealed from the public?

Introduced → Passed House → Passed Senate → Resolving Differences → To President → Became Law

■ Clean Slate Act of 2019 (H.R. 2348)

Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

This bill would automatically seal criminal records for certain arrests and nonviolent offenses. Criminal records would be sealed one year after the person completes every requirement of their sentence.

Sponsor: Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester (Democrat, Delaware, At-Large)

“ Opponents say

Only sealing a record, instead of totally expunging them, does not completely get rid of the issue. By only sealing the records, the information still exists and there could still be loopholes to make that information accessible again.

“ Proponents say

"In Pennsylvania alone, approximately three million individuals, or over a third of working age citizens, have criminal records. Although many of these are the result of low-level, nonviolent offenses, criminal records can present a significant obstacle to employment, housing, and education..."

Source: Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (Republican, Pennsylvania, District 14)

Should inmates be allowed a shortened or reconsidered sentence?

Introduced → Passed House → Passed Senate → Resolving Differences → To President → Became Law

■ Second Look Act of 2019 (H.R. 3795)

Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

This bill allows for a reconsideration of an inmate's sentence based on certain qualifications. Those include a sentence longer than 10 years, length served no less than 10 years, if the inmate is no longer a threat to any person, and if the inmate demonstrates the ability to reenter the greater community successfully. Additional factors to be considered include the nature of the offense, the age at the time of the offense, details of juvenile cases, victim statements, and mental/physical examinations. Finally, there is a requirement of the US Sentencing Commission to submit an annual report to the Judiciary Committees of the House and the Senate detailing the amount of reductions and information about each case.

Sponsor: Rep. Karen Bass (Democrat, California, District 37)

“ Opponents say

"Our communities are safer when we do a better job of rehabilitating offenders in our custody. The Council should not hastily pass this legislation but should instead gather data about how defendants released under the current version of the IRAA fare over time. The victims of these crimes and the community at large should not be jeopardized by the Council's rush to expand the IRAA. The proposed legislation misses the mark."

- U.S. Attorney Jessie Liu

“ Proponents say

"Our bill targets a harsh reality: there are hundreds of thousands of people behind bars – most of them people of color – who were sentenced under draconian laws during the height of the War on Drugs that we have since recognized were unfair... That means there are now an enormous number of people in prison who have served lengthy prison terms, are not a threat to the community, and are ready for re-entry, but are stuck under these outdated sentencing laws... Our bill recognizes this unfairness and gives people who have served their time a 'second look.'"

- Sen. Cory Booker (Democrat, New Jersey)

Should inmates be allowed a shortened or reconsidered sentence?

Introduced → Passed House → Passed Senate → Resolving Differences → To President → Became Law

■ Justice Safety Valve Act of 2019 (H.R. 1097)

Referred to the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security

HR 1097 allows for the courts to impose a sentence below the minimum mandatory sentence. This would only be done if the court found sufficient evidence that the mandatory minimum is longer than necessary.

Sponsor: Rep. Robert Scott (Democrat, Virginia, District 3)

“ Opponents say

"It is a core principle that prosecutors should charge and pursue the most serious, readily provable offense. This policy affirms our responsibility to enforce the law, is moral and just, and produces consistency. This policy fully utilizes the tools Congress has given us. By definition, the most serious offenses are those that carry the most substantial guidelines sentence, including mandatory minimum sentences."

- Former Attorney General Jeff Sessions

“ Proponents say

"Attorney General Sessions' directive to all federal prosecutors to charge the most serious offenses, including mandatory minimums, ignores the fact that mandatory minimum sentences have been studied extensively and have been found to distort rational sentencing systems, discriminate against minorities, waste money, and often require a judge to impose sentences that violate common sense... Our bill will give discretion back to federal judges, so that they can consider all the facts... before sentencing."

- Rep. Robert Scott (Democrat, Virginia, District 3)



Not Telling the Whole Story: An Earthquake In Wait That When Tapped Will Rattle the World



by Lacino Hamilson | February 2020 | MDOC

There has been, in the last 10 years or so, an extraordinary amount of attention paid to and organizing around Criminal Justice Reform. Teachers, activists, scholars, community organizers, politicians, and others in the "free world" challenging state violence carried out by an imperial carceral apparatus. The uptick in attention (and some policy action) suggests that members of the public are increasingly exposed to open debate around Criminal Justice Reform, but they aren't. If imprisoned men and women aren't breakout writers or celebrity prisoners in one way or another they are excluded from public discussions, which mean public debate is not as open as it may appear. This writing will explore how academic and scholarly filters act as "gatekeepers" preempting and controlling which imprisoned citizens can participate in public discussion. More generally this writing will explore how "gatekeeping" excludes substantial public participation of members of all targeted groups.

Despite advances in all form of communication in the "free world," in prison writing is still the principal way of receiving and conveying information. In prison there is no Facebook live, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, podcast or any of that. There is pen and paper and a limited supply of them. So if imprisoned citizens, 70% of whom enter prison without a high-school diploma or GED, do not write on an academic or scholarly level, they are dismissed as analysts, theories, and critical thinkers.

When members of targeted groups are dismissed for not possessing professional skill sets it's severely narrows the depth and reach into the problem(s) in need of solving. It carries deep

What does this matter? The quick answer, at least to me because I fall into the category of an imprisoned citizen who critically thinks and writes not so much about the reform of the Criminal Justice system but the transformation of a society that traffics in retribution, is that academic and scholarly filters subtly play the role once performed overtly by policies of racial exclusion. Actually, academic and scholarly filters may be a more important barrier than overt racism, though the two are closely linked. In practice it simply replicates the status quo by including incarcerated citizens with similar skill sets and ideologies as those currently controlling Criminal Justice Reform and social justice movements.

blind spots in public understanding that give rise to opinions, outlooks and actions when problems come to the fore: the whole story is not being told. Imprisoned citizens day-to-day experiences generate a theoretical corpus that could enable the public to think more clearly about Criminal Justice Reform, and methods appropriate for getting there. Actually, most imprisoned citizens are crucial in interlocutors, theorists, and testifiers even when they aren't trying to be, it's called surviving the totalitarian nature of prison. Some are consciously trying, but with little chance of reaching a mass audience they have had no need or motivation to compromise in pursuit of mass acceptance.

For years they have developed in raw form observations, reflections and analysis for a targeted audience largely out of view. Imagine the potential to expedite conscious building if the public gains access to a lot more raw Spirit, such as the idea that not reform as the switching up of anything, but the foundation of the new society. Perhaps their "rawness" allows them to pull off something those in the free world are too deep inside mainstream institutions to see?

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of imprisoned men and women engaged in the construction of vocabularies, identities, social theory, and agency to counter carceral assaults (the matrix of police, prosecutors, courts, prisons, parole boards, e-incarceration, parole officers, etc), but they do not surface on the discursive radar of the free world audiences because of gatekeeping, which is neither logical nor practical. Gatekeeping is embedded in the network of civil rights and social justice organizations, universities and colleges, faith-based groups, publishing companies, media outlets, and so on, that legitimize what can be said, who has the authority to speak and what is sanctioned as true. It works through everyday practices that do not question why conventional standards and rules are right or their collective consequences.

For example, in prison citizens often incorrigibly articulate principal hostility to the criminal justice system's regime of so-called corrections and rehabilitation, using colloquial language, slang,

and a verbal collage of frustration. But since a lot of them are "talking that talk" inserting curses, using language and actions that raises the stakes, and articulating more self-determine approaches they are eschewed, reprimanded and marginalized if they aren't outright vilified and blacklisted.

I write as much out of what I've seen and been through as out of careful study of books, doing my best to provoke new ways of comprehending, critiquing, and antagonizing the political monopoly, pharmaceutical welfare, law & order mentality, employment with no future, inner-city disenfranchisement, etc.. Does it really matter that I've had very little academic exposure? It's ingrained in every atom of my existence that one of the highest expressions of human creativity is to foster a broad and continuing dialogue among the many who struggle, as I do, to find more effective ways to challenge oppressive systems and promote social justice through education.

What I do not understand- and this is what I really really want to get clear-- is what standard or rule is so compelling as to justify allegiance to requirements that sideline the people whom reforms are supposedly intended to liberate? The goal of Criminal Justice Reform, social justice more broadly, has never been to just change this or that policy. Reform is to enable imprisoned citizens to interrupt and change patterns and behaviors in themselves and the institution and communities of which they are apart. It's nearly impossible to do when reform is experienced as something done to you, not as something you do. The fight should be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacity for working collaboratively to create change, regardless of someone's scholastic skill or not.

We do not have to romanticize the standard by which imprisoned citizens are measuring, but poor people, prisons majority clientele, have always used what they got until they get what they need, an essentials over refinements approach. In his proactive collection of essays, "American Nightmare: Facing the Challenge of Fascism," Henry A. Giroux warns that we are witnessing a failure to risk, a refusal to be in danger, a fear to speak courageously against a burgeoning authoritarian regime; a crisis of progressive politics agency and social justice literacy. Which has always departed from standards and rules, redeploying them in loud, rule-breaking, and sometimes radical and non-performing ways that unlock whole sections of the mind and body.

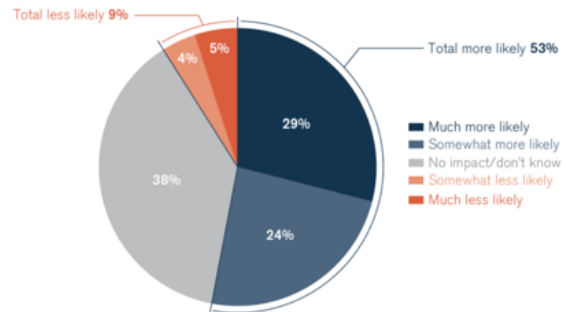
I know this is hard to accept fact, but a dialogic wall has been erected between targeted and non-targeted, and this has had a profound effect. The social justice community as a whole must acknowledge it not as a sign of some wrongdoing, but as an act of heightened determination and solidarity with targeted groups. Solidarity is not a mere technique we can use to get some results. Rather, it is a communicative process that reflects social experiences in order to understand the historical forces at work. It enables those in solidarity to name and discuss coded situations to uncover generative themes, and draws on substance over style to create social connectedness and mutual responsibility.

A substance field dialogue includes all stakeholders, especially those targeted for surveillance and incapacitation. It is important for those for people to decide for themselves which words and phrases are best to use because words or phrases have organic ties to the communities on whose behalf they are used. And let's not forget, although imprisoned citizens, generally speaking, "technical skills" may not be able to compare with those of the corresponding number of formally educated people in the world, their hatred of prison and readiness to abolish it when the opportunity

should present itself, rest among them to the degree greater than any other demographic.

Poll respondents' significantly more likely to vote for a candidate who supports lowering prison population"

- A majority of poll respondents (53%) said a candidate's support for reforms to lower the number of nonviolent offenders in Illinois' prisons makes them more likely to vote for that candidate.
- Only 9% of respondents said they would be less likely to support such a candidate, with the remainder saying it would have no impact on their votes.



Source: Illinois Policy Institute-commissioned poll conducted by Fabrizio, Lee & Associates, May 16-18, 2016
 *Poll respondents are 500 Illinois registered voters.

"Pollsters asked: If a candidate for the Illinois state legislature supported reforms to lower the number of nonviolent offenders in Illinois' prisons and provide more treatment options, would that make you MORE or LESS likely to vote for that candidate? If it would not affect your vote, just say so."

@illinoispolicy

So while in the last decade or so the Criminal Justice Reform movement has significantly grown and racked up some significant wins, the valuable necessary interdisciplinary political analysis and elaboration of intellectual work of imprisoned men and women (written, self-published, and otherwise), a category of activity that encompasses and exceeds the disciplinary structures of academic and activist discourse alike, has been overlooked and disregarded often in favor of celebrity endorsements and commercialized platforms. It has also made it appear necessary to identify with a vast machinery of "persuasion politics" (i.e. please give us what's our's anyway as if it's some special gift) that obliterates the very possibility of resistance around a sense of ethical courage, social solidarity, and political imagination an earthquake in weight that when tapped will rattle the world.

I believe that however difficult it is, the social justice community-at-large must stretch its comprehension to embrace non-traditional writings from which I and many others have learned. The development of relationships that facilitate this process will inevitably lead to tension and conflict, an important development it could contribute to the formation of game-changing interactions that more rapidly and substantially move public consciousness. I mean if the purpose of writing and speaking is to communicate ideas to blaze new social trails that brought in the basis for serious debate, then anyone can make quality and substantial contributions to a better and brighter future right?

For this reason, as Paulo Freire writes in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, to achieve solidarity it is necessary to trust and targeted groups and in their ability to reason. Whoever lacks trust will fail to initiate (or abandon) dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiques, monologues, and instructions. The fight is not merely for Criminal Justice Reform, but for the freedom to create and to construct, to wonder, and venture at whatever skill set or stage of development or maybe in. —

Lacino Hamilton describes himself as a "public sociologist who endeavors to open up dialogue which deepens the understanding of public issues with audiences beyond the academy". Lacino can be reached at: Lacino Hamilton 247310 Macomb Correctional Facility 34625 26 Mile Road, New Haven Michigan Please include addresses in body of letter, envelopes are discarded.

CALLS FOR COLLABORATION

SCHOLARS | ORGS | ACTIVISTS

In addition to publishing content raising awareness about the Right2Vote Campaign and its initiatives, the Right2Vote Report accepts contributions from prisoners in the form of articles, artwork and poetry as well as the contribution of stamps. We also work with other nonprofits and organizers to amplify your voices empowering grass-roots organizing networks across the country. This publication and its campaign are about *you* and our most meaningful contributions come from the inside. For readers interested in submitting their work: handwritten typed or printed can be sent to P.O. Box 2278, Detroit, MI 48202 or emailed to: <amanisawari@gmail.com> Please also write your return address directly onto the body of your letter or back of your artwork submission

Right2Vote Campaign Artwork

The campaign is accepting artwork submissions for promoting and marketing the New Suffrage Movement. ALL artwork related to the restoring prisoners, parolees and probationers' voting rights will be used to promote the Right2Vote campaign. Please sign your artwork. Artwork will be featured on T-shirts, stickers, buttons, wristbands, tote bags and social media. We are also still looking for an official logo to use for this campaign!

Michigan "Good Time" Campaign to End Truth-in-Sentencing

We are in the process of collecting 400,000 signatures to add a ballot initiative in favor of repealing Truth-in-Sentencing in Michigan in order to allow prisoners to earn time off of their sentences in the way that prisoners have access to in 47 other states in this country. In Michigan prisoners must serve 100% of their minimum before being eligible to appear before the parole board. In anticipation of a successful campaign we have multiple opportunities for incarcerated supporters to participate. Subscribe to Motivate Michigan's monthly newsletter in support of #PassMIGood-Time. If you are incarcerated in Michigan, you can also participate as a inside campaign coordinator.

Prisoner Legal Action Network (PLAN)

Amani Sawari works as apart of the Midwestern PLAN teams serving Michigan and Illinois. Please initiate your legal relationship with PLAN by submitting the form: LEGAL OBSERVER AFFIDAVITS AFFORD PRISONERS A WAY TO DOCUMENT RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT to National Lawyers Guild 132 Nassau St. Room 922, New York, NY 10038

Michigan Department of Attorney General Conviction Integrity Unit

Mission: Investigates claims of innocence to determine whether there is clear and convincing new evidence that the convicted defendant was not the person who committed the conviction offense.

Contact: Antonia Giles
3030 W. Grand Blvd. Ste. 10-200
Detroit, MI 48202

Chicago Votes

Mission: Chicago Votes is a non-partisan, non-profit organization building a more inclusive democracy by putting power in the hands of young Chicagoans. We're changing laws to make Chicago and Illinois a better place to be young, and in the process we're making democracy FUN.

Contact: Jen Dean, Co Deputy Director
234 S Wabash Ave,
Chicago, IL 60604

Voice of the Experienced (VOTE)

Mission: Through civic engagement and policy reform, we increasingly mobilize a strong group of leaders to transform the movement for the elimination of the carceral state.

Contact: Bruce Reilly, Deputy Director
2022 St. Bernard Ave., Suite 307,
New Orleans, LA 70117

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights & Urban Affairs

Mission: We fight discrimination against all people, but we put special focus on the central role that current and historic race discrimination plays in sustaining inequity.

700 14th St. NW, Ste 400
Washington, D.C. 20005

Prisoners' Help Line (collect calls accepted): (202) 775-0323

Black History Month Facts

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM

She was the first African American woman elected to the House of Representatives. She was elected in 1968 and represented the state of New York. She broke ground again four years later in 1972 when she was the first major party African American candidate and the first female candidate for president of the United States.



HATTIE MCDANIEL

In 1940, Hattie McDaniel was the first African American performer to win an Academy Award—the film industry's highest honor—for her portrayal of a loyal slave governess in *Gone With the Wind*. To this date the Oscars are criticized for their lack of African American representation among their nominees.



VIOLA DESMOND

A Canadian civil rights advocate and businesswoman of Black Nova Scotian descent. In 1946 she challenged racial segregation at a cinema in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia by refusing to leave a whites-only area of the Roseland Theatre.



JOHN MERCER LANGSTON

He was the first black man to become a lawyer when he passed the bar in Ohio in 1854. When he was elected to the post of Town Clerk for Brownhelm, Ohio, in 1865, Langston became one of the first African Americans ever elected to public office in America. He was also the great uncle of Langston Hughes.



NINA SIMONE

Born February 21, 1933, a singer, songwriter, musician, arranger, and civil rights activist. Her music spanned a broad range of musical styles including classical, jazz, blues, folk, R&B, gospel, and pop.

